

Subregion: EAST **County:** MONO

Applicant: EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST

Project Title: EAST WALKER RIVER ASSESSMENT AND WATERSHED PLAN

Reference Number: SNC 070274

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust will conduct an assessment of the East Walker River from the Bridgeport Valley to the California-Nevada border, and produce a management plan for the East Walker River watershed. Specifically, the Trust will:

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PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Establish criteria for evaluating progress	April 2008 - July 2008
Summarize available hydrologic and geographic information	July 2008 – September 2008
Describe current, historical, and possible future environmental conditions	July 2008 – September 2008
Complete and submit six-month progress report to SNC	October 2008
Catalog and summarize existing water quality data	October 2008 – March 2009
Complete and submit twelve-month progress report to SNC	April 2009
Describe natural anthropogenic influences on water quality, wetlands, and aquatic habitat	March 2009 - May 2009
Describe quantifiable characteristics for water quality improvements	May 2009 – September 2009
Complete and submit eighteen-month progress report to SNC	October 2009
Define methods individually designed for achieving and sustaining water quality improvements	October 2009 – January 2010
Collaborate with willing parties to identify potentially effective projects	January 2010 – March 2010
Propose a schedule for initiating and implementing measures	March 2010
Propose and adopt conservation measures assessment outcomes	March 2010
Final Report/Final Payment Request	April 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Salary for Watershed and Resource Specialists	\$ 52,000
Land Associate Salary (Map development and production)	\$ 3,260
Lands Specialist Salary (Stakeholder and agency cooperation)	\$ 16,000
Supplies and Materials	\$ 500
Administration	\$ 11,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$81,860

Letters of Support:

- Mono County District 4 Supervisor
- Bridgeport, California – Private Citizen

Recommendation:

Recommend for funding at requested amount of \$81,860.

East Walker River Watershed Assessment and Management Plan

Project Summary: The proposed project will first prepare an assessment of environmental conditions that influence water quantity, water quality, and aquatic habitat in the East Walker River watershed (i.e., the Bridgeport Valley, upstream of the California-Nevada border). Based on that assessment, a watershed management plan will be developed to address the main problems identified in the watershed assessment.

The assessment will be based on existing data, will catalog current information from available sources, and will identify any obvious gaps in information. A wealth of relevant information already exists for the basin but has not been assembled and synthesized within a watershed context.

The fundamental goals and objectives of the proposed project are to understand the physical and biological processes and related water quality problems within the watershed in sufficient detail to recommend strategies for addressing those problems, and ultimately reduce anthropogenic impacts to the water resources of the watershed. The East Walker River watershed provides a significant fraction of the potential (undiverted) inflow to Walker Lake that has lost volume and increased in salinity in the past century. Some of the smaller tributaries to the East Walker River may provide critical habitat for the recovery of Lahontan cutthroat trout. The East Walker River watershed includes the Bridgeport Valley, which is the largest contiguous area of wetlands in Mono County. The East Walker River watershed is the only remaining significant watershed in the county without an assessment and plan.

In the past year, Mono County has completed assessments and plans for the West Walker River watershed, Mono Basin, and Upper Owens River watershed. The Eastern Sierra Land Trust was awarded a subcontract from the county regarding wetlands conservation in the previous projects. The Mono County Resource Conservation District is expected to take an active role in this project in the way of providing historical information and current land use practices in this area. They will also be critical in any type of implementation when the plan is completed. The Bridgeport Regional Planning Advisory Committee, which would act as the initial watershed council, represents a cross-section of the community of the Bridgeport Valley. The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest would also be interested in augmenting information they have collected previously for the assessment of watershed conditions on federal lands.

The budget for this project is \$81,860 and includes staff and contractual time, transportation, and all supplies and materials.